

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 3-6 and 9-18 in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein.

1.-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An etching method comprising the step of performing anisotropic etching with respect to an interlayer insulating film composed of an organic-inorganic hybrid film containing an organic component and a silica component by using a plasma derived from an etching gas containing a N₂ gas and a hydrogen fluoride gas.

8. (Original) The etching method of claim 7, wherein said etching gas contains an inert gas.

9.-18. (Canceled)